

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY

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INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

(Chapter II of the Patent Cooperation Treaty)

(PCT Article 36 and Rule 70)

REC'D 09 AUG 2005

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Applicant's or agent's file reference NANY/20402181/KC	FOR FURTHER ACTION		See Form PCT/IPEA/416
International application No. PCT/SG2004/000371	International filing date (day/month/year) 17 November 2004	Priority date (day/month/year) 18 November 2003	
International Patent Classification (IPC) or national classification and IPC. Int. Cl. 7 B81B 7/00, 1/00; B01D 61/42			
Applicant NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY et al			

1. This report is the international preliminary examination report, established by this International Preliminary Examining Authority under Article 35 and transmitted to the applicant according to Article 36.

2. This REPORT consists of a total of 3 sheets, including this cover sheet.

3. This report is also accompanied by ANNEXES, comprising:

a. (sent to the applicant and to the International Bureau) a total of 4 sheets, as follows:

sheets of the description, claims and/or drawings which have been amended and are the basis for this report and/or sheets containing rectifications authorized by this Authority (see Rule 70.16 and Section 607 of the Administrative Instructions).

sheets which supersede earlier sheets, but which this Authority considers contain an amendment that goes beyond the disclosure in the international application as filed, as indicated in item 4 of Box No. I and the Supplemental Box.

b. (sent to the International Bureau only) a total of (indicate type and number of electronic carrier(s)) , containing a sequence listing and/or table related thereto, in computer readable form only, as indicated in the Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing (see Section 802 of the Administrative Instructions).

4. This report contains indications relating to the following items:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. I	Basis of the report
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. II	Priority
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. III	Non-establishment of opinion with regard to novelty, inventive step and industrial applicability
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. IV	Lack of unity of invention
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Box No. V	Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VI	Certain documents cited
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VII	Certain defects in the international application
<input type="checkbox"/> Box No. VIII	Certain observations on the international application

Date of submission of the demand 3 May 2005	Date of completion of the report 25 July 2005
Name and mailing address of the IPEA/AU AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE GPO BOX 200, WODEN ACT 2606, AUSTRALIA -mail address: pct@ipaaustralia.gov.au acsimile No. (02) 6285 3929	Authorized Officer JULIA HU Telephone No. (02) 6283 2754

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

International application No.

PCT/SG2004/000371

Box No. I Basis of the report

1. With regard to the language, this report is based on the international application in the language in which it was filed, unless otherwise indicated under this item.

This report is based on translations from the original language into the following language which is the language of a translation furnished for the purposes of:

international search (under Rules 12.3 and 23.1 (b))

publication of the international application (under Rule 12.4)

international preliminary examination (under Rules 55.2 and/or 55.3)

2. With regard to the elements of the international application, this report is based on (replacement sheets which have been furnished to the receiving Office in response to an invitation under Article 14 are referred to in this report as "originally filed" and are not annexed to this report):

the international application as originally filed/furnished

the description:

pages 1-12 as originally filed/furnished

pages* received by this Authority on with the letter of

pages* received by this Authority on with the letter of

the claims:

pages as originally filed/furnished

pages* 17-20 as amended (together with any statement) under Article 19

pages* received by this Authority on with the letter of

pages* received by this Authority on with the letter of

the drawings:

pages 1/5-5/5 as originally filed/furnished

pages* received by this Authority on with the letter of

pages* received by this Authority on with the letter of

a sequence listing and/or any related table(s) - see Supplemental Box Relating to Sequence Listing.

3. The amendments have resulted in the cancellation of:

the description, pages

the claims, pages 13-16

the drawings, sheets/figs

the sequence listing (specify):

any table(s) related to the sequence listing (specify):

4. This report has been established as if (some of) the amendments annexed to this report and listed below had not been made, since they have been considered to go beyond the disclosure as filed, as indicated in the Supplemental Box (Rule 70.2(c)).

the description, pages

the claims, Nos.

the drawings, sheets/figs

the sequence listing (specify):

any table(s) related to the sequence listing (specify):

If item 4 applies, some or all of those sheets may be marked "superseded."

INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY REPORT ON PATENTABILITY

International application No.

PCT/SG2004/000371

Box No. V **Reasoned statement under Article 35(2) with regard to novelty, inventive step or industrial applicability; citations and explanations supporting such statement**

1. Statement

Novelty (N)	Claims 1-33	YES
	Claims	NO
Inventive step (IS)	Claims 1-33	YES
	Claims	NO
Industrial applicability (IA)	Claims 1-33	YES
	Claims	NO

2. Citations and explanations (Rule 70.7)

NOVELTY (N) AND INVENTIVE STEP (IS) claims 1-33

The invention of the claims is a method of actuating and an actuator operated by electroosmotic force. No individual citation or obvious combination of citations disclose or fairly suggest all of the features of such an actuator.

The closest art of US 6537437 discloses a similar device (Fig. 6). However, it has a closed chamber 72 with a movable/deformable membrane 74 connecting an actuator arm 76 and a pump 70, as opposed to an open-ended tube with an actuator/piston in direct fluid communication with the liquid in the tube (wherein an electrical field is applied along a lengthwise axis across the tube) as defined in the present claims. The latter device offers a simpler and more compact structure and does not appear to be obvious from the teaching of the prior art. Therefore, the invention as defined in the present claims is considered to be novel and inventive.